

Doc Watson replied in a wonderously sincere, intense way. He spoke of the Dula case as if it had happened yesterday.

Doc said that Anne Melton stabbed Laura while she was in Tom's arms. Furthermore, Sheriff Grayson, who was extremely jealous of Tom, knew Tom did not do it, and if there is a final day of reckoning, men like Grayson would have to account for their infamous behavior. Tom, he said, was an extremely handsome and fine person, of noble character, and protected Anne by forever keeping his silence. He made one last protestation of his innocence, Doc maintained, while he was sitting on his coffin, riding the wagon on the way to his hanging. Men about to die, Doc attested, will not usually hold to a story if it weren't true and could no longer protect them.

Tom was poor and never could afford a good lawyer. Such disrespect was shown him that after his hanging, he was taken to his home, thrown on his bed, and left to bleed over the floor. Ultimately, he was buried and the Laura Foster case closed.

After a time, talk began to build up about Grayson, and Grayson left the area. At the present time, there is still a descendant of Grayson in the area, an elderly man who is, ironically, a lawyer.

Years later, as Anne Melton lay on her death-bed, she was attended to by Doc Watson's great-grandmother, Betsy Triplett Watson. Anne told her, if she were sure she would get well no more, she had something to say about Tom's hanging, but as long as there was a chance she might get well again, she didn't dare speak. "And you can guess what it was," said Doc.

Anne died without ever revealing the secret, and the name of Tom C. Dula remains beclouded to this day.